

Testimony of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
Deborah Hamer, APRN, Director of Quality Assurance
On H. B. No. 5450 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING EXPEDITED PARTNER
THERAPY FOR SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES
Public Health Committee, Friday, March 12, 2010

Good afternoon Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and members of the committee. I am Deborah Hamer, Director of Quality Assurance at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England. PPSNE is the largest provider of reproductive health care and family planning in Connecticut and Rhode Island, serving over 70,000 patients annually. Many of our patients come to us for testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, so we are an enthusiastic supporter of Raised Bill 5450, An Act Concerning Expedited Partner Therapy for Sexually Transmitted Diseases. As a nurse practitioner, every day I see firsthand the impact that STDs have in the lives of our patients, and we know that later in life the impact STDs have on fertility, can be both tragic and costly.

We would like to make several important points in support of this proposal.

1. ***Sexually transmitted diseases are on the increase***, and the Centers for Disease Control reported last year that one in four American teen girls has a STD infection...one in two African American girls. Of 11,512 Chlamydia cases reported in Connecticut in 2007, 8,617 were female, compared to 2895 male cases. This means that females are seeking testing and treatment, while males, in large part, are not doing so.
2. ***Re-infection of those who have been treated is a critical issue***. The CDC has also reported that within 3 to 4 months of being tested and treated, up to 25% of patients, most often young women, are re-infected because their partner did not receive treatment. American social culture does not encourage forthright communication between sex partners, and young women often find it difficult or even impossible to convince a partner to proactively seek treatment.
3. ***This proposal for expedited partner therapy is in keeping with solid public health practice and the recommendations of the CDC***. Public health providers will, as always, take every precaution to insure that both partners are seen by a provider and treated, however in cases when the partner cannot be convinced or will not seek treatment, allowing a client to deliver a written prescription or the oral medication to a partner, along with instructions for use, is an important strategy for addressing this epidemic.

We applaud the Department of Public Health for taking the lead in promoting this legislation, and we look forward to seeing the impact that this intervention will almost certainly have—in the reduction in total cases of Chlamydia and gonorrhea, as well as in the number of re-infections.